POPULAR MECHANICS' ARTICLE *DEBUNKING 9/11 MYTHS* AS FLAWED AS THE 9/11 "TRUTH" CONSPIRACY THEORIES IT ATTACKS

By: Joel v.d. Reijden | **Date:** September 13, 2016 | 9/11 STUDY CENTER

Lawn Tractor Faceoff
Top Riding Mowers Under $1600
Popular Mechanics
TECHNOLOGY SCIENCE AUTOMOTIVE HOME OUTDOORS
Jay Leno
Drives The World's Biggest Pickup
DEBUNKING
9/11
LIES
Conspiracy Theories Can't Stand Up To The Hard Facts
A growing chorus of fringe groups says a U.S. plot brought down the towers. After an in-depth investigation, PM answers with the truth.
ALSO IN THIS ISSUE
NASCAR'S HIGH-TECH SECRET
Wild Homebuilt Computers
LONG-TERM CAR TESTS: Living With The Nissan Titan, Scion xB And Chrysler Pacifica
44 DIY Tips:
DEBUNKING
9/11
MYTHS
WHY CONSPIRACY THEORIES CAN'T STAND UP TO THE FACTS
FOREWORD BY JAMES B. MEIGS

CONTENTS

1. Intro: Bryan Callen made me write this
2. Theories countered by Popular Mechanics
   - 2.1 Theory 1: WTC pod and flash theories
   - 2.2 Theory 2: Pentagon no-plane theories
   - 2.3 Theory 3: WTC seismic spikes
   - 2.4 Theory 4: Stand-down orders
   - 2.5 Theory 5: Flight 93 shot down
   - 2.6 Theory 6: WTC smoke puffs during collapses
   - 2.7 Theory 7: WTC 7 other demolition theories
3. Popular Mechanics fails to counter molten steel issue
4. How NIST itself refused to explain the WTC collapses
5. Popular Mechanics and the CIA?
6. Conclusion: a P for Psywar and an F for Failure

"Within hours of the 9/11 terrorist attacks the Safety, Health and Environmental (SH&E) professionals for the Bechtel Group found themselves at the door of hell, the World Trade Center (Ground Zero) ... Thermal measurements taken by helicopter each day showed underground temperatures ranging from 400 degrees F to more than 2,800 degrees F [1,540°C] due to the ongoing underground fires."

> May 16, 2002, American Society of Safety Engineers, 'Members Recall Massive Devastation, Sorrow While

> Working at WTC'.

"FACT: Jet fuel burns at 800° to 1500°F, not hot enough to melt steel (2750°F). ... "I have never seen melted steel in a building fire," says retired New York deputy fire chief Vincent Dunn, author of The Collapse Of Burning Buildings: A Guide To Fireground Safety."

> Popular Mechanics, peculiar rebuttal to the conspiracy theory claim *"No kerosene fire can burn hot enough to melt steel."*

Intro: Bryan Callen made me write this

Bryan Callen (kicking) on the Joe Rogan Experience podcast, the inspiration for this little extra ISGP article on 9/11. Just a few guys having fun, right? Not exactly. But more on that in another article.

In March 2005 Popular Mechanics, a well-known engineering magazine, published the article *Debunking 9/11 Lies: Conspiracy Theories Can't Stand up to the Hard Facts*. Soon after, the title of the article's online edition was changed to the slightly less aggressive-sounding *Debunking 9/11 Myths*. A book with similar title followed suit in 2006. Today the article can be found here on the Popular Mechanics website.

To this day, and despite the fact that it took many years for NIST to finish up its reports on the World Trade Center collapses, every professional rent-a-skeptic or 9/11 conspiracy disbeliever is touting the Popular Mechanics article in particular as the "bible" that undermined all key claims of the 9/11 "Truth" movement.

What actually prompted me to put together this article is a statement of Bryan Callen on the Joe Rogan Experience podcast of January 2, 2015, just over 10 minutes in:

> *"If you actually want a really good debunking of [the WTC collapses], Popular Mechanics got together a whole bunch of mechanical engineers and scientists [Joe: "Yeah, yeah."] called Debunking the 9/11 Myths and they talk, for example, how jet fuel burns at a certain temperature, and I believe it's 1,600 degrees [870°C]. Iron melts at 900 degrees [480°C], especially that kind of iron, so it made sense that the iron would start to melt and the building would crumble. ... It's a really interesting [article]. ...*

[To 9/11 skeptics:] I didn't know you got your degree in mechanical engineering, my friend."

Those statements are as quick around the corner as they come: 1,600°F trumps 900°F - collapse explained! Let's not pay attention to the amount of steel, how it is welded together, how long it takes to heat up, fireproofing, burn times, additional fuel loads, oxygen content, or anything else. Let's also forget that 1,500°F / 815°C (not 1,600°F) is a theoretical flame temperature high under the most ideal circumstances that in all cases was MUCH higher than the temperatures the WTC steel ever reached - and that 900°F steel temperatures still are at least 250-350 degrees shy of serious collapse danger for a structural steel building (structural steel loses strength from 800°F / 430°C). Then again, steel buildings have never collapsed before or since 9/11, when it happened three times - in all cases at virtual free fall speed.

It would have been nice here of Callen to have introduced a few nuances, but he's just an individual. Surely Popular Mechanics must have produced a more balanced and in-depth article than Callen has been describing here. So let's see. In this article we'll take a brief look at the claims made by Popular Mechanics and how well they stand up to the facts as discussed by myself in a whole range of articles, mainly:

1. *The Failure to Intercept: Timeline and Over 50 Questions the 9/11 Commission Part II Should Ask High Officials*.

2. *Whatever Happened: Belief in WTC Explosives Widespread on 9/11 -- Until Authorities Denied it; Evidence of Huge Explosions, Rapid Flashes, and Liquefied Steel; NIST Report Based on Pure Fraud*.

3. *The Supranational Suspects Behind 9/11: White House, CIA, Saudis, Pakistanis, a Russian GRU firm, and the Israelis*.

4. *New WTC 7 Findings: NIST Criminally Manipulated Computer Input data; Explosions and Extreme Heat Ignored; Key Videos Cut Short*.

5. *Coast to Coast AM aiding CIA and Bush White House in psyopping 9/11 Truth?*

6. *The No-Planers of 9/11 "Truth"; How Pentagon, Flight 93 and WTC Pod Theories Paralyzed A Research Community That Hardly Ever Existed*.

7. *Pentagon Hole and Damage Area Dimensions Back Testimony That Flight 77 Impacted on 9/11; All No-757 and Missile Disinformation Debunked*

This last listed article dates back to January 2005, two months before the Popular Mechanics article was published. Yes, I've been at it for a long time. And I have done my homework. Let's see if Popular Mechanics has.

Theories countered by Popular Mechanics

Following is a list of 9/11 "Truth" theories **attacked by Popular Mechanics**. Added to them are my own personal interpretations and observations:

1. **Theory 1 attacked by Popular Mechanics:** Flight 11 and Flight 175 didn't impact the World Trade Center, as indicated by the "pod", "flash" and "lack of windows" on the planes.

   Bogus indeed: This theory was invented by Coast to Coast AM guest Dave von Kleist, whose wife, Joyce Riley, has been spreading disinformation on Gulf War Syndrome since the 1990s on shows as Coast to Coast AM and Jeff Rense.

   Kleist was allowed to promote his "pod, flash and no-windows" theories with regard to the World Trade Center impacts on Coast to Coast AM and other disinformative online radio shows in the months prior to Popular Mechanics (easily) debunking them. Ben Chertoff, the Popular Mechanics editor in charge of producing the article, was invited to Coast to Coast AM as well.

   The theory was also perpetuated by Coast to Coast AM guest Morgan Reynolds, who was close to a superclass CIA and State Department clique, including the Bush family, before he turned "whistleblower" four months after the Popular Mechanics report.

2. **Theory 2 attacked by Popular Mechanics:** Flight 77 - and not even a Boeing 757 - hit the Pentagon.

   Bogus indeed: Variations of this theory have been promoted **by 95% of 9/11 "Truth"**, despite overwhelming evidence against it.

   To me, personally, the widespread promotion of this theory is among the clearest evidence on the planet that the supposedly independent, alternative media is completely penetrated by the security services and superclass. I never believed this theory and I know many ordinary skeptics of 9/11 who also never believed it. In fact, the whole theory of Flight 77 not hitting the Pentagon is **based on structurally-promoted, manipulated "evidence"**.

3. **Theory 3 attacked by Popular Mechanics:** Seismic spikes immediately preceded the collapses of the towers, indicating the presence of explosives.

   Bogus indeed: This theory was invented by Christopher Bollyn of the pro-Nazi American Free Press. In order to produce it, he misrepresented statements of a number of geologists and simply ignored that the spikes show a build-up towards a peak.

   Bollyn also claimed a Global Hawk hit the Pentagon, wrongly stated that Ben Chertoff of Popular Mechanics is a cousin of Homeland Security chief Michael Chertoff, accused Ben Chertoff of being an *"Illuminati Disinformation Tool,"* believes in chemtrails, denies the Holocaust, and in mid 2006 pushed the bogus Pentagon no-plane account of Sam Danner with fellow-Holocaust denier Michael Collins Piper.

   Bollyn's theory is part of an organized campaign to promote the idea that huge bombs were located inside the WTC's basements, exploiting the fact that a number of burning kerosene-accompanied elevators crashed down to the basement. Willy Rodriguez, once a stage assistant to national security skeptic James Randi, has been a key person in this campaign.

4. **Theory 4 attacked by Popular Mechanics:** Stand-down order.

   Bogus in the manner presented: All this speculation about Cheney issuing stand-down orders (thanks to manipulations of the highly curious Norman Mineta account) and how NORAD was confused by war games indeed is nonsense.

   First of all, Cheney actually issued a shoot-down order. In addition, NORAD excercises as Vigilant Guardian and Global Guardian indeed were ongoing on September 11, including the injecting of false radar data, but there is no evidence that this caused any delay beyond "30 seconds" in the anti-terrorism response. The real problem appears to have been the FAA. And Bush. And Rumsfeld.

   What Popular Mechanics should have pointed out is that there's no disputing that **Bush and Rumsfeld went against all protocol** on the morning of 9/11, with the FAA's General Mike Canavan, a former bin Laden hunter soon rewarded with a position at Bechtel, also miserably failing by leaving FAA headquarters in total chaos when he was out of the country on 9/11. NORAD had its failures too, but couldn't have prevented the WTC impacts on its own. Lower to mid-level personnel at the FAA seem to have responded in the

manner they should have. To illustrate, the only reason QRA jets were scrambled at all is because at a lower level, FAA Boston Center directly contacted NORAD's North-East section, which relayed the call to QRA site Otis AFB. Meanwhile, against protocol, FAA headquarters did not contact the National Military Command Center (NMCC), where Rumsfeld should have been present - but wasn't anyway. The NMCC, in coordination with NORAD, would have been responsible for scrambling QRA fighters.

The fact that Bush, Rumsfeld and Canavan, coincidentally all with links to Saudi terrorists or their (alleged) Saudi intelligence handlers, were not prosecuted for criminal negligence is an absolute travesty. But a stand-down order? There was none. We only have strong indications of a "stall-and-look-the-other-way" suggestion, primarily to persons as Bush and Rumsfeld, the two primary officials who could issue shoot-down orders.

5. **Theory 5 attacked by Popular Mechanics:** Evidence reveals that Flight 93 was shot down.

   No opinion/irrelevant: Cockpit voice recordings of Flight 93 most certainly seem to indicate the presence of Arab hijackers and that the plane's passengers were about to break into the pilot's cabin. Also, the hole in the ground in Pennsylvania **precisely matched a Boeing 757**, as most "mainstream" conspiracy theorists prefer to ignore.

   However, the real question is why Bush, Rumsfeld and FAA headquarters were **still gaining *"situational awareness"*** at the time of the Flight 93 crash, which occurred two hours after the first hijacking. As tragic as a shoot down would have been, this is what should have happened. The shocking fact that fighter jets wouldn't have been in time to stop Flight 93 from hitting the White House or Congress is absolutely inexcusable in every way. The Bush administration should have resigned over that failure alone.

6. **Theory 6 attacked by Popular Mechanics:** Smoke puffs visible as the World Trade Center towers come down clearly indicate explosives.

   Inconclusive: It's obvious one could ignore all related evidence and argue that they were caused by downward air pressure. Looking at testimony of people having seen flashes and the Mark Heath video revealing rapid, sequential flashes along with smoke puffs, and one

would have to conclude that some of the smoke puffs might also indicate explosives. This balance, of course, is not present with Popular Mechanics.

7. **Theory 7 attacked by Popular Mechanics:** WTC 7 demolition.

   Virtual certainty: At the time of the Popular Mechanics article, the WTC 7 investigation was still in its infancy, with Popular Mechanics parroting NIST in its claim that *"WTC 7 was far more compromised by falling debris than the FEMA report indicated [with] the fire [being] fed by tanks of diesel fuel..."* Turns out, neither structural damage nor diesel fuel played any role in the collapse, which NIST has openly admitted to.

   Instead, today NIST talks about low-temperature thermal expansion of long-span beams leading to a collapse initiation, although NIST refuses to explain the entire collapse in detail. In addition, with extreme reluctance NIST has admitted to free fall collapse, something Popular Mechanics didn't mention. Popular Mechanics also didn't mention the extreme heat measured in the rubble, or the sound of one or more very loud explosions preceding and during WTC 7's collapse. On top of that, today we even have solid evidence, if not proof, that NIST has heavily and criminally manipulated its WTC 7 computer model in order to "prove" a natural collapse due to fire.

   ISGP has a very detailed article on the WTC 7 collapse that can be found here.

Popular Mechanics fails to counter molten steel issue

As the reader can see, as Popular Mechanics takes on more and more aspects of 9/11, it's getting increasingly hard for them to fully debunk these areas. After all, only so many easy-to-debunk contrived issues can be made up - such as no-plane or seismic spike theories.

When Popular Mechanics attempts to address the molten steel issue, they fail the hardest. The specific claim Popular Mechanics attacks in this case is the following one:

> *"We have been lied to," announces the web site AttackOnAmerica.net. "The first lie was that the load of fuel from the aircraft was the cause of structural failure. No kerosene fire can burn hot enough to melt steel.""*

Anyone really familiar with the 9/11 story, would instantly assume that here Popular Mechanics is going to address the three dozen accounts indicating molten steel at Ground Zero, plus well-established claims that the maximum temperatures measured at Ground Zero, at the core of the towers, in the days after 9/11 were *"more than 2,800 degrees F [1,540°C]."* Certainly naive old me was assuming that Popular Mechanics would at least give it a go of some sort. However, the magazine doesn't. In fact, it inadvertently admits that the molten steel cannot be explained in a conventional matter:

> *"Jet fuel burns at 800° to 1500°F, not hot enough to melt steel (2750°F). However, experts agree that for the towers to collapse, their steel frames didn't need to melt, they just had to lose some of their structural strength—and that required exposure to much less heat. ...*
>
> *"I have never seen melted steel in a building fire," says retired New York deputy fire chief Vincent Dunn, author of The Collapse Of Burning Buildings: A Guide To Fireground Safety."*

As said, in its rebuttal Popular Mechanics fails to make any mention of the 2,800°F / 1,540°C temperatures having been measured at Ground Zero or the overwhelming evidence of molten steel (including sulfidated steel). They just ignore all this while copying NIST's age-old scenario of knocked off fireproofing (pure and improbable speculation) followed by thermal weakening, sagging floor beams, followed by collapse initiation. That's it. NIST later corrected/expanded their explanation that the sagging floor beams destabilized the perimeter structure (by introducing a completely fictional pull-in force in their computer simulation), but that's about it.

What Popular Mechanics had to do was denounce the fact that no steel was found on 9/11. But unlike lead NIST scientist John Grossman did in later years, the Popular Mechanics editors clearly didn't have the balls to make such a blatantly false statement.

So the only alternative for Popular Mechanics would have been to ask questions as: How do we explain the extensive presence of molten steel, the three-month underground fires in the elevator pits of the towers, and the *"more than 2,800 degrees F [1,540°C]"* temperatures? The only possible answer they could have given is: We can't. It is indicative of the presence of thermite, as the NFPA 921 Guide for Fire and Explosion Investigation explains. And with that, the almost instant removing and overseas shipping of the vast majority of World Trade Center steel was a crime for which the Bush government and New York authorities under mayor Rudolph Giuliani should have stood trial.

How NIST refused to explain the WTC collapses

What is equally important to understand is that the official theory of thermal expansion eventually leading to (gradual) collapses simply don't make sense. With the collapses of the WTC towers we don't witness gradual sagging and collapsing. From one moment to the next we hear thunderous explosions, we see smoke puffs appear all around the tops at different floors and at regular intervals, and a split second later the tops crash down at free fall speed. The tops get crushed for the most part, especially with regard to the North Tower, while the rest of the towers are still standing - but all of a sudden these lower, much, much stronger-built floors also, instantly, begin to explode and crush downward at almost free fall speed. Thus the vast majority of witnesses on 9/11 talk about hearing sudden "explosions" preceding the collapses. Not a single soul was talking about a gradual collapse in the traditional sense.

The situation is so bad that NIST has even refused to explain how the buildings fully collapsed. They have limited themselves to "explaining" the "collapse initiation sequence". For the rest they rely on a 2007 paper of Professor Zdenek Bazant in the Journal of Engineering Mechanics of the American Society of Civil Engineers, a *"simplified analysis relying solely on energy considerations"* as to how the top sections of the World Trade Center could have crushed the bottom sections. Of course, Bazant forgot to explain how enough separation (of several feet) between the two sections could have been created that would make his equations theoretically possible.

Meanwhile, NIST has refused to acknowledge the presence of molten steel or 2,800°F / 1,540°C temperatures at Ground Zero, has refused to acknowledge what appears to be the (clear) sound of explosives, has ignored visible evidence and firefighter witness testimonies of flashes inside the building immediately before and during the collapses, has introduced artificial pull-in forces in its limited computer models to explain the collapse initiation sequences of WTC 1 and 2, and has completely and criminally distorted its WTC 7 collapses model as well. Over the past several years, ISGP has written extensively about NIST manipulations with regard to Twin Towers and WTC 7.

Granted, Popular Mechanics does mention *"NIST reports that pockets of fire hit 1832°F. [1000°C]"* However, this still is a far cry from the measured temperatures at Ground Zero. Also, by the time of its final report, NIST explained that the temperature of the steel in the Twin Towers - at least what little steel was retained - only exceeded 600°C in a few very isolated pockets and certainly didn't reach the 700°C.

Popular Mechanics and the CIA?

Obviously there has been speculation that the Popular Mechanics article was a CIA production. No proof ever surfaced of that, but what is interesting is that the publisher of Popular Mechanics, George R. Hearst, Jr., used to sit on the industrial relations committee of the CIA-controlled and ultraright American Security Council, with John McCain, the no. 1 national security senator in the United States with family ties to anything from the Pilgrims Society to the CIA-controlled World Anti-Communist League (WACL), writing the foreword of the subsequent book of Popular Mechanics. In fact, John McCain was chairman of the International Republican Institute (IRI) from 1993 until his death in 2018. The IRI, together with Madeleine Albright's National Democratic Institite of International Affairs, always fell under the National Endowment for Democracy, all of these groups founded in 1983 to take over CIA funding and direction of political movements around the world. This aspect is particularly deeply discussed in ISGP's "liberal CIA" article.

The American Security Council link was actually discovered by the author of this article and has already been discussed and sourced in ISGP's article ***The Supranational Suspects Behind 9/11***.

Conclusion: a P for Psywar and an F for Failure

The Popular Mechanics article is hardly a masterpiece of journalistic investigation for which a whole team would have been necessary. For the most part the authors simply pick an obviously false theory from a third-rate conspiracy website and then spent a few lines explaining why this particular theory cannot be correct. It's super-biased toward the government's position in every way. For the rest the Popular Mechanics team just tries to argue from its own authority in the construction field. ISGP has produced an article entitled *The Media's Psywar Manual* in which these tactics, and dozens of others, are described in a systematic manner, complete with examples. The ones most at play with the Popular Mechanics article:

Tactic 5: *"Focus on evidence that is easy to discredit, or at the very least, inconclusive."*
Tactic 9: *"Place these conspiracy theorists against academics and other experts who have impeccable credentials."*
Tactic 11: *"Quote from generally respected government investigating committees and present their conclusions as gospel."*

It is important to understand that these are universal tactics. It's possible to spot the same patterns everywhere.

It simply makes no sense to see the Popular Mechanics article as having any kind of authority on the 9/11 Truth issue. Almost all theories they

attack are not representative of genuine, non-media-hyped 9/11 Truth skeptics - and the answers they provide for two or three relevant questions are wholly inadequate, leaving us with basic, superficial and generally irrelevant reasoning. The *Debunking 9/11 Lies* piece reaches the intellectual maturity of a group of recalcitrant, stuck up 8 graders. I can only give it an F. It's a failure, a total failure.